

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01997 111217Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01
ACDA-12 /132 W

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R 101444Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7561
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USNATO BRUSSELS 12
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1997

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PDEV, MILI, ECTU, SY
SUBJECT: CUBANS IN ERITREA

REF: STATE 86083

1. THE SARG HAS TRADITIONALLY SUPPORTED THE ERITREAN
LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND MOST RECENTLY REITERATED THIS PLEDGE

APRIL 5 WHEN BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND MEMBER SUKKARIYAH RECEIVED REPRESENTATIVES OF ERITREAN PEASANTS UNION. SUKKARIYAH CONFIRMED SYRIA'S SUPPORT AND BACKING FOR THE STRUGGLE OF ERITREAN PEOPLE FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. THE NEXT DAY, PRESS PUBLISHED A STATEMENT OF BAATH PARTY SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS NOTING THAT THE PARTY HAS OFFERED ASSISTANCE TO THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION

AND CONTINUES TO DO SO TODAY. PAPER SAID THAT THE PARTY HAS TRIED TO UNIFY THE ELEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION. THE ARTICLE ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE BAATH PARTY HAS ESTABLISHED PARTICULARLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

2. SARG HAS SUPPORTED ERITREANS POLITICALLY AND HAS SUPPLIED THEM WITH SMALL ARMS IN PAST BUT HAS LITTLE CAPABILITY TO DO MORE IN TERMS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE DUE TO THE HEAVY DEMANDS ON SYRIAN MILITARY IN LEBANON. BASIS OF SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR ERITREANS IS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ERITREA TO STRAITS OF HORMUZ AND DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CONSISTENT POLICY TOWARD LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO AVOID UNDERCUTTING STAND ON PALESTINIANS. WHETHER SARG IS WILLING TO DO MUCH MORE THAN PAY LIP SERVICE TO ERITREAN CAUSE DEPENDS ON OTHER FACTORS MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. CRITICAL FACTOR AS FAR AS SARG IS CONCERNED RIGHT NOW IS ATTITUDE OF SOVIET UNION WHICH SYRIA IS RELYING ON TO BUILD ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY. SARG HAD SUPPORTED SOMALIA, ALTHOUGH NOT SOMALIA'S
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CLAIM TO OGADEN, BUT RECENTLY RETREATED ON ITS SUPPORT IN LIGHT OF SOVIET PRESSURE. WE BELIEVE SATDLS POSITION ON ERITREA IS STRONGER. FACING DILEMMA OF SOVIET SUPPORT FOR CUBAN EFFORTS IN ERITREA ON ONE HAND AND TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ERITREA MOVEMENT ON OTHER, WE ASSUME SYRIA WILL GRAVITATE TOWARD POSITION OF CALLING FOR NEGOTIATED/MEDIATED SETTLEMENT WHILE TRYING TO STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM REAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROBLEM AS POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO MAKE A DIRECT APPROACH TO SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ON OUR CONCERN ABOUT ERITREA AND OUR HOPE THAT SYRIANS CAN EXERCISE GOOD OFFICES WITH CUBANS AND ERITREANS TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF MEDIATED SETTLEMENT. SYRIANS MAY BE WILLING TO URGE RESTRAINT ON ALL PARTIES ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT SYRIAN VOICE WILL CARRY MUCH WEIGHT.
PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Litigation History:
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